



Knapp: "Army" balloon pilot.

Knapp promotes the Army on his own time and with his own money.

AS volunteers clung to the rugged wicker basket, **MAJ Kevin Knapp** adjusted the burners that fed hot air into the colorful balloon overhead.

Knapp, a human resource development officer at the Army Reserve's 88th Regional Support Command in St. Louis, Mo., has been spreading the Army message in his hot-air balloon for more than six years.

In 1989, after spending more than 14 years in special forces, Knapp moved to St. Louis as the Reserve operations officer for the St. Louis Recruiting Battalion. He'd been impressed by balloon rallies in the past, but thought it would be too difficult to become a balloonist himself.

Now he incorporates his love of ballooning with Army recruiting by piloting an 85-foot-tall, 60-foot-wide balloon bearing the word "Army" in enormous gold letters.

Knapp promotes the Army on his own time and with his own money. In the last six years, he's flown some 250 hours in the balloon and has spent many more hours manning static displays and taking road trips.

He's participated in events that have taken him from Washington, D.C., to California, and 17 states in be-

tween. Since he has no ground crew, he relies on the volunteers from communities across the country who help at many of the events.

"My goal is to get the Army name out in public," Knapp said. "It's good to remind civilians that the Army's a viable option as a service of choice. Veterans who see the balloon come up and start talking about what it was like when they were in uniform. The more they talk about their stories, the more family members and neighbors and friends listen."

Many soldiers ask Knapp how they can become part of the Army balloon team, he said. "I grab them and ask, 'What are you doing? Come here, hold this.' They can get involved in ballooning pretty much the same way I did." — *PFC Christopher Rowe, 364th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

A RECENT promotion ceremony at the U.S. Army Reserve Command at Fort McPherson, Ga., was different from most — husband and wife **Robert** and **Angela Walk** were both promoted to lieutenant colonel.

Angela was promoted first as her father, retired Air Force Lt. Col. David Spotswood, helped USARC deputy commander MG Craig Bambrough pin on her new rank. Then Robert saluted his newly promoted wife, acknowledging that she out-ranked him, even if only by a few minutes, before his father, retired COL James Walk, helped Bambrough pin on his new rank.

Angela was commissioned in 1982 after completing her bachelor of arts degree in psychology through the ROTC scholarship program at Creighton University in Omaha, Neb.

She has served as an ordnance officer in Germany and at Picatinny Arsenal, N.J. After leaving active duty in 1992, she joined the staff of the Army Reserve's 95th Division in Oklahoma City. She's currently an instructor at the Army's Combined Arms and Services Staff School at the Regional Training Institute of the Georgia Military Institute in Macon, Ga.

Robert earned an ROTC commission in 1982 from the University of New Hampshire. He has served as a chemical officer at various military installations in Germany and the United States.

He left active duty to join the Reserve in 1993, joined the USARC staff in 1997 and is now the executive officer to the deputy chief of staff for operations. — *USARC Public Affairs Office*

MORE than a quarter-century ago, the Vietnam War was raging and the bodies of countless American service members were sent home for burial at Arlington National Cemetery.

For a young bugler responsible for playing "Taps" during hundreds of these funerals, the experience made a lasting impression.

In 1975 **James E. May** left the U.S. Marine Band

and entered the Baptist Bible Seminary in Clarks Summit, Pa. He re-entered active duty in 1982 as an Army chaplain.

"I attribute my calling to the ministry to my experiences as a bugler," said May, now a lieutenant colonel. "As I observed the Navy chaplain ministering to grieving families, I was convinced that the Lord could also use me to bring words of hope and encouragement to military families."

Last summer, May's military career came full circle when he was named senior Army chaplain at Arlington National Cemetery.

Approximately 25 funerals are conducted each day at Arlington. May performs four to six ceremonies daily. That entails meeting with families before each funeral.

"We can't provide extensive counseling at that time, but we can offer words of encouragement and consolation, and pray with them," May said.

The chapel and graveside services provide other opportunities for him to minister to grieving veterans



May: A return to Arlington.

and families.

May, who teaches an adult Sunday-school class at the Fort Myer Chapel at Arlington, occasionally also counsels the cemetery's staff members. And he provides premarriage and marriage counseling.

May's wife, Ellen, is an Arlington Lady at the cemetery. As such, she carries a message of condolence from the Army chief of staff to grieving families. Many times she and her husband have conducted funeral services together.

Their son, James, also works in the ministry. He's the 67th Signal Bn. chaplain at Fort Gordon, Ga., and is a pastor for the Protestant congregation on post.

Like his father, he's a graduate of the Baptist Bible Seminary.

"We have been blessed beyond description as we ponder the way God has directed our lives," May said. "Our family has profited from our military experience in more ways than can be put into words." — *U.S. Army Military District of Washington PAO*

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SOLDIERS of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 29th Infantry Regiment, call **SSG Marvin Wideman Jr.** "Fireplug" for a reason: he's short but has reached great heights as a powerlifter.

Wideman holds five national and two international powerlifting titles. He earned the most recent national title in March, when he combined a total of 1,190 pounds in the squat, bench press and deadlift during the USA Power Lifting Military National Championship in Killeen, Texas.

At 4 feet 11 inches tall, Wideman said people often look at him and can't believe he can lift so much weight.

"But I train in the sport like the Army trains to fight," he said. "I'm at war with my competitor. And I compete to win."

Wideman began lifting weights in 1990, while a sheriff's deputy in Gwinnett County, Ga. "I wanted to become stronger so I could protect myself," he said. It was during one of his early training sessions that Wideman met his coach and mentor, George Herring.

"Herring told me if I let him train me he'd make me a world champion," said Wideman, who took him up on the offer. That same year he won the Georgia State Championship. A year later he won the World Police



Wideman: World-class powerlifter.

and Fire Games, setting two world records in the 132-pound division.

Three years after he began training professionally, he garnered a third-place win at the U.S. Powerlifting Senior Nationals in Raleigh, N.C.

"There I was ranked in the top five in the world," said Wideman. "It was a real motivator to keep me going."

Wideman, a 17-year Army veteran who served eight years in the Georgia National Guard, plans to compete in the upcoming World Dead-Lift Championship in Reno, Nev., in November. — *SSG Alberto Betancourt*